

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00 AID-05 IO-13 ACDA-07
TRSE-00 EA-07 EUR-12 /108 W
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R 051313Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2443
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL MADRAS
USCINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER OUTLINES GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF
JANATA GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER DESAI DELIVERED A TWENTY-
MINUTE RADIO AND TV ADDRESS ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 4
TO OUTLINE HIS GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. HIS
THEMES CLOSELY PARALLELED THOSE OF THE JANATA PARTY MANI-
FESTO (SEE NEW DELHI 2093) AND THE ACTING PRESIDENT'S
ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT (NEW DELHI 4388). HE EMPHASIZED
THE NEED FOR DECENTRALIZING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER,
PLEDGED TO END DESTITUTION WITHIN A DECADE, PROMISED TO
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MAXIMISE EMPLOYMENT, AND REASSURED THE SOUTHERN STATES THAT
THEY WOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED BY HIS GOVERNMENT. ON FOR-
EIGN POLICY, HE REITERATED HIS COMMITMENT TO "GENUINE
NON-ALIGNMENT". DESAI'S SPEECH WAS A SIGNIFICANT DEPAR-
TURE FROM MRS GANDHI'S PRACTICE, SINCE SHE NORMALLY
ADDRESSED THE NATION ONLY TO MAKE SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENTS.
IN AN UNPRECEDENTED STEP, THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

IS BEING GIVEN EQUAL TIME TO RESPOND TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS. END SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKING IN A SOFT AND SLOW VOICE, DESAI MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) REFERRING TO HIMSELF AS THE "HUMBLE CUSTODIAN" OF THE PEOPLE'S TRUST AND ALLUDING TO THE LIFTING OF "CLOUDS OF FEAR AND DISTRUST", HE THANKED THE PEOPLE FOR PUTTING THEIR FAITH IN THE JANATA GOVERNMENT UNDER VERY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.

(B) HE CHARACTERIZED HIGHLY CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENTS AS A MENACE TO DEMOCRACY AND PROMISED TO END DESTITUTION WITHIN TEN YEARS THROUGH THE DEVOLUTION AND DECENTRALIZATION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER.

(C) POINTING OUT THAT INDIA REMAINS A PREDOMINANTLY VILLAGE-ORIENTED SOCIETY, DESAI UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING THE LOT OF RURAL PEOPLE AND OF REVERSING THE FLOW OF VILLAGERS TO THE CITIES IN SEARCH OF EMPLOYMENT. WHILE AGREEING THAT LARGE INDUSTRY HAS A ROLE IN THE ECONOMY HE CITED THE NEED FOR SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES AND URGED THE APPLICATION OF "APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY".

(D) THE PM REAFFIRMED THE RIGHT TO WORK AND PROMISED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD RESTRUCTURE ECONOMIC PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE EMPLOYMENT.

(E) CALLING FOR AN EGALITARIAN RATHER THAN EXPLOITATIVE SOCIETY, HE URGED AN END TO THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

(F) THE PM PRAISED THE PEOPLE FOR REFUSING "TO BEND THEIR KNEES BEFORE INSOLENT MIGHT" DURING "THE DARKEST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOURS" OF THE EMERGENCY AND URGED THEM TO REBUILD THE COUNTRY'S INSTITUTIONS ON THIS TRADITION OF FREEDOM AND TO "ENSURE THAT THEY WERE NEVER AGAIN QUITE SO VULNERABLE TO SUBVERSION FOR PARTISAN ENDS".

(G) CITING THE NEED FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO RESTORE THE CIVIL RIGHTS WHICH HAD BEEN ECLIPSED DURING THE EMERGENCY, HE PLEDGED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD MOVE SWIFTLY TO FREE THE MEDIA AND SAFEGUARD JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE. AT THE SAME TIME, PEOPLE MUST RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW AND REFRAIN FROM RESORTING TO VIOLENCE. THE PM PLEDGED TO CREATE AUTONOMOUS MACHINERY TO INVESTIGATE CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AND MISUSE OF OFFICE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

(H) IN A REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S MAJORITY IS BASED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN THE NORTHERN AND CENTRAL STATES, THE PM REASSURED THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTHERN STATES THAT HE WOULD NOT OVERLOOK THEIR INTERESTS BECAUSE HIS WAS A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND "NO REGION OR SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION HAS REASON TO FEEL

ORPHANED". HE ALSO SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT INTEND TO SECURE DEFECTIONS OR TOPPLE ADMINISTRATIONS IN STATES CONTROLLED BY OTHER PARTIES.

2. DESAI BRIEFLY TOUCHED UPON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SAYING THAT THE ONLY PATH TO PEACE IS "GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT, WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR, AFFECTION OR ILLWILL." HE "PASSIONATELY" BELIEVED IN PEACE AS "THE ONLY EFFECTIVE MEANS OF SALVATION FOR ALL OF US WHO INHABIT THIS PLANET". THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF HIS FOREIGN POLICY WILL BE NON-ALIGNMENT AND THE "COLLECTIVE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS FOR THE SOLUTION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS THE WORLD OVER". HIS GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO FOLLOW THIS PATH "IN A SPIRIT OF COMRADESHIP AND FELLOWSHIP WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD...WITHOUT ANY MENTAL RESERVATIONS". DESAI CONCLUDED: "IN THE WORLD OF TOMORROW INCREASINGLY ECONOMICS AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS WILL DISPLACE POLITICS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS. WE CAN PLAY OUR DUE ROLE IN THAT DEVELOPMENT ONLY IF WE ARE ECONOMICALLY STRONG OURSELVES."

3. COMMENT: THE PM'S SPEECH OFFERED NO NEW DEPARTURES FROM THE GENERAL THEMES EXPRESSED IN THE JANATA MANIFESTO, DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND MOST RECENTLY IN THE ACTING PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT. HE PLACED STRONG EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO RETURN TO GANDHIAN VALUES. ALTHOUGH RESTRAINED IN HIS REMARKS ON THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION, DESAI MADE CLEAR THAT CHARGES OF CORRUPTION WILL BE INVESTIGATED. HIS ADDRESS WAS ALMOST IN THE NATURE OF A FRIENDLY CHAT WITH HIS COUNTRYMEN TO SKETCH OUT THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THEY HAD PLACED THEIR TRUST. THE SPEECH WAS A SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM PRIOR PRACTICE IN TWO RESPECTS: MRS. GANDHI HAD INFREQUENTLY USED THE MEDIA OF RADIO AND TV, AND THEN USUALLY TO MAKE DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENTS SUCH AS THE DECLARATION OF THE EMERGENCY AND THE CALLING OF ELECTIONS. JUDGING FROM HIS SHORT INITIAL PERIOD IN OFFICE SO FAR, DESAI MAY BE MORE ANXIOUS TO USE SUCH PLATFORMS AS THE TELEVISED ADDRESS AND OPEN PRESS CONFERENCES TO POPULARIZE HIS NEW GOVERNMENT AND AT THE SAME TIME TO FULFILL HIS PLEDGE TO UNSHACKLE INDIA'S MEDIA. IN ADDITION, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION WILL BE GIVEN EQUAL TIME ON RADIO AND TV TO REPLY TO THE PM'S STATEMENT. CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY LEADER Y.B. CHAVAN IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE HIS ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 5. SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, PRESS CONFERENCES
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
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TAGS: PINT, IN, JANATA PARTY, (DESAI, MORARJI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/271bfa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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